

Message Text

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ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 EB-07 FAA-00 TRSE-00 COME-00
DOTE-00 USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 INR-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00
OC-06 CCO-00 PER-01 ST-01 WRD-01 /051 W
----- 110616 /50 45

R 021427Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2435
INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (A D D E D D I S T R I B U T I O N S)

DEPT FOR A/SY/FO; KARACHI FOR RSS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ASEC, LE

SUBJECT: USE OF BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

1. AS THE BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT HAS REOPENED SUCCESSFULLY WITH PLAN FOR EXPANDING PRESENT OPERATIONS, THE POST WISHES TO ESTABLISH POLICY REGARDING ITS USE BY USG OFFICIAL TRAVELERS.

2. RSO VISITED AIRPORT NOVEMBER 30 TO MEET VOA CORRESPONDENT DOUGLAS ROBERTS. THE ROUTE TO THE AIRPORT IS REASONABLY SECURE; RSO FOLLOWED TRADITIONAL ROUTE VIA CORNICHE, CHATILA PALESTINIAN CAMPS, AIRPORT CIRCLE (MORGAN CIRCLE) TO AIRPORT ACCESS ROAD. THERE WAS ONE CHECKPOINT AT THE AIRPORT ROAD MANNED BY NON-SYRIAN ASF TROOPS AND LEBANESE ISF TROOPS.

3. SECURITY AT AIRPORT ITSELF IS MINIMAL AND RSO WAS ABLE TO WALK THROUGH ARRIVALS CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATION AREA TO FLIGHT LINE WITHOUT HINDRANCE. ALTHOUGH ONLY BRIEFLY OBSERVED, DEPARTURE SECURITY CHECKS WERE CURSORY AT BEST. ALTHOUGH THERE WERE INCREASED NUMBER OF SEMI-UNIFORMED SECURITY PERSONNEL DURING ACTUAL ARRIVAL, THERE WAS MASS CONFUSION AND VERY LITTLE ATTEMPT
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TO CONTROL ARRIVING PASSENGERS OR OTHERS IN THE AREA.

4. DURING THE VISIT, RSO MET WITH NUMBER OF AIRPORT SECURITY OFFICERS WHO FREELY ADMITTED THE POOR SECURITY

CONDITIONS, BUT THEY ASSURED RSO SITUATION WOULD IMPROVE WHEN MORE LEBANESE POLICE WERE AVAILABLE FOR AIRPORT SECURITY DUTIES. WHEN THIS WOULD OCCUR WAS UNSPECIFIED.

5. FOR THE ABOVE REASONS, POST PREFERS NOT GRANT BLANKET CLEARANCE TO USG OFFICIAL TRAVELERS TO USE THE AIRPORT TO ENTER BEIRUT AND INTENDS TO GRANT SUCH CLEARANCES ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS FOR THE PRESENT. IN ADDITION, THE USE OF BEIRUT AS A TRANSIT POINT TO OTHER POSTS IS TO BE AVOIDED. ALTHOUGH THE POST INTENDS TO USE THE AIRPORT AS PRIMARY MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION IN AND OUT OF BEIRUT, ALL VISITORS WILL BE MET AND TRAVELERS WILL BE ESCORTED TO AND FROM THE CHANCERY. LANE

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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